

Message Text

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20

ACTION AGR-20

INFO OCT-01 EA-11 ADP-00 AID-20 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11

FRB-02 INR-09 NSAE-00 RSC-01 TRSE-00 XMB-07 OPIC-12

CIEP-02 LAB-06 SIL-01 SAL-01 OMB-01 NSC-10 SS-14

STR-08 CEA-02 L-03 H-02 PA-03 PRS-01 USIA-12 TAR-02

RSR-01 /163 W

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R 290415 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2673

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PASS AGRICULTURE

E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: EAGR ETRD JA

SUBJ: AGRICULTURAL LIBERALIZATION: BIALOGUE RE

LIBERALIZATION OF AG PRODUCTS CONTINUES

1. SUMMARY: WHILE IT IS REPORTED THAT PRIME MINISTER TANAKA HAS DIRECTED MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE SAKURUCHI TO STUDY AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING LIBERALIZATION OF AG COMMODITIES, NO SUCH RECOMMENDATIONS HAVE AS YET BEEN MADE. EMBASSY' S ASSESSMENT IS THAT NO CONSENSUS HAS EMERGED ON POSSIBLE LIBERALIZATION OR QUOTA EXPANSION AND THAT OPPOSITION TO ANY SUCH ACTION REMAINS STRONG ENOUGH TO BLOCK CHANGES IN GOJ POLICIES FOR THE MOMENT. END SUMMARY.

2. LAST WEEK THREE NEWS STORIES APPEARED RELATIVE TO AG LIBERALIZATION AS FOLLOWS: (A) ON WEDNESDAY IT WAS REPORTED THE LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY HAD PASSED A RESOLUTION OPPOSING ANY FURTHER LIBERALIZATION WHATSOEVER OF AG COMMODITIES. (B) ON FRIDAY THE PRESS REPORTED A STUDY

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ON IMPORT LIBERALIZATION WAS UNDER WAY IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND IT WAS ANTICIPATED THAT SUBSTANTIAL LIBERALIZATION OF AG COMMODITIES WOULD BE RECOMMENDED AND WOULD BE IMPLEMENTED. (C) ON SATURDAY, NIHON KEIZAI REPORTED THE AGRICULTURAL COMMITTEE OF THE LOWER HOUSE OF THE DIET HAD CONSIDERED A RESOLUTION SHARPLY OPPOSING LIBERALIZATION OF AG COMMODITIES, BUT HAD DEFERRED ACTION UNTIL CERTAIN QTE DOMESTIC AGRICULTURAL PROGRAMS UNQTE HAD BEEN FINALLY CONSIDERED. THESE QTE OTHER PROGRAMS UNQTE ARE SAID TO INCLUDE THOSE BEING SUGGESTED BY PRO-PONENTS OF LIBERALIZATION WHO ARE RECOMMENDING DIRECT COMPENSATION BY GOJ TO FARMERS FOR LOSS OF INCOME ASSOCIATED WITH IMPORT EXPANSION.

3. IN DISCUSSIONS WITH AGATT, MAF REPS (PRINCIPALLY YOSHIOKA, DIRECTOR, INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT, INDICATED MAF IS BEING PRESSED BY OTHER MINISTRIES AND BY PRIME MINISTER HIMSELF IN EFFORT TO FIND A WAY TO EFFECT SOME MEASURE OF AGRICULTURAL IMPORT LIBERALIZATION OR EVEN A SUBSTANTIAL EXPANSION IN QUOTAS. HOW-EVEN, MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE SEEMS TOTALLY OPPOSED TO ANY SUCH ACTION. FURTHERMORE, THE DOMESTIC POLITICAL SITUATION IS SUCH THAT THE TANAKA GOVERNMENT WILL BE SEVERELY CRITICIZED AND SRUCIAL AREAS OF SUPPORT LIKELY TO BE LOST BY QUOTA ELIMINATION OR SUBSTANTIAL EXPANSION. INDEED, MAF OFFICIALS ASSERT THAT SUCH ACTION COULD EVEN CAUSE GOVERNMENT TO FALL.

4. A DECISION TO EXPAND IMPORT ACCESS, IT APPEARS, WILL NEED TO COME FROM THE PRIME MINISTER HIMSELF. HE IN TURN WILL NEED BROAD SUPPORT IN THE DIET, WHICH IS DOUBTFUL. MAF REPS REFUSED TO SPECULATE ON ANY LIKELY OUTCOME OF CURRENT CONSIDERATION, BUT CONFIRMED THAT IN FACT THE STUDY REFERRED TO ABOVE IS UNDER WAY AND THAT QTE AN ANSWER MUST BE PROVIDED TO THE PRIME MINISTER BY EARLY OR MID- APRIL UNQTE.

5. IF AGRICULTURAL IMPORT ACCESS IS EXPANDED, IT IS EXPECTED TO BE ACCOMPANIED BY DOMESTIC PROGRAMS AIMED AT SAFEGUARDING FARM INCOME ON A COMMODITY- BY-COMMODITY BASIS. WHETHER AND, IF SO, HOW AND WHEN SUCH PROGRAMS WILL BE MOUNTED IS A QUESTION.

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6. EMBASSY WILL CONTINUE TO FOLLOW THE SITUATION AND
REPORT AS APPROPRIATE.
INGERSOLL

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*** Current Classification *** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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